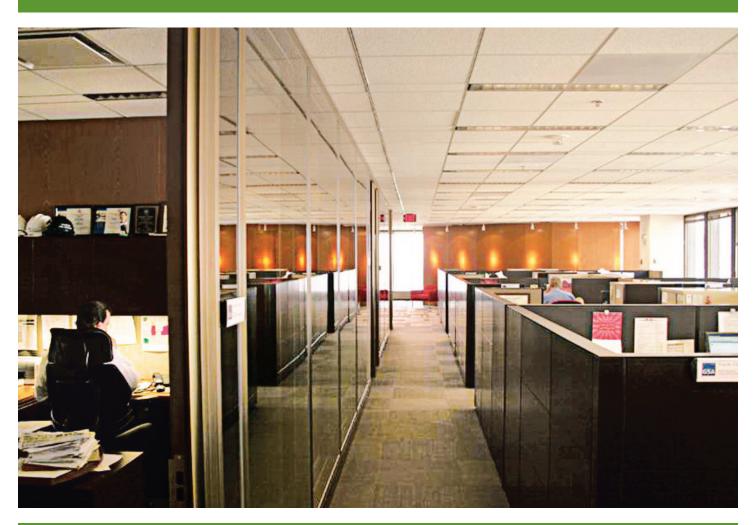# LEVERAGING MOBILITY, MANAGING PLACE

APPENDIX: 6 CASE STUDIES

WHITE PAPER

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GSA PUBLIC BUILDINGS SERVICE

The regional office of the Great Lakes Region, GSA Public Buildings Service (PBS) embraced both telework and mobility. In 2002, it was the first organization to participate in GSA's WorkPlace 20•20 program, an effort to redesign the workplace for better alignment with an organization's mission and goals. The WorkPlace 20•20 process revealed that PBS existing workspace was not serving the evolving needs of its employees. Although most of the office was private, individual workspace, employees actually participated in a mix of planned and spontaneous meetings and needed more group workspaces, ranging from formal to informal. Research revealed that many employees worked in a variety of locations and a shared workspace strategy would be more suitable.

The resulting design included an overall decrease in individual workspace, from about 38 percent to 34 percent of the total area, and an increase in collaboration space, from about 7 percent to 13 percent of the total area. Also, workspaces were designed to improve the connection among employees by utilizing open office furniture and glazed private offices. Social spaces, like the break room, were redesigned to accommodate the trend toward spontaneous collaboration and casual meetings.

A post-occupancy evaluation of the space provided some valuable insights. It revealed that acoustic strategies could further improve the open plan by providing additional sound control. The increase in meetings, especially spontaneous ones, also meant that workplace protocols should be an important part of the new work practices. Overall, the post-occupancy evaluation indicated success for the redesign of the office, with two-thirds of survey respondents stating that the new workplace improved group communication.

UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

More than 90 percent of staff in the Business Enterprise organization of the United States Marine Corps (USMC) Headquarters telework regularly. The 32 staff members of this small office telework an average of 1.7 days per week. Business Enterprise uses the standard Department of Defense telework agreement to formalize each employee's telework arrangement. It also uses the annual agreement review as an opportunity to collect commute data. Based on such data, it estimates that employees save a total of $13,000 on gasoline, reduce carbon emissions by 100,000 lb, and eliminate 3,500 hours of commute annually.

To ensure that teleworkers can work effectively, Business Enterprise leverages both technology and work protocols. Its SharePoint site increases employees' ability to collaborate. Its daily "check-in/check-out" protocol and the expectation that employees return phone calls within three minutes keep communication flowing. Managers conduct quarterly impact evaluations for each employee to assess how effectively work is getting accomplished.

During the east coast snow storms of winter 2010, Business Enterprise effectively maintained continuity of operations in the National Capital Region. Even though the Federal Government was officially closed for 4-1/2 days, Business Enterprise employees in the region were "at work" for 63 percent of that time. Telework accounted for 53 percent of the work hours recorded.

As the USMC office focuses on creating more efficient ways to work, Business Enterprise believes telework is a key strategy in improving business processes, reducing environmental impacts, and achieving cost savings.

BUREAU OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, FIREARMS AND EXPLOSIVES

Mobility is a natural fit for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF). Its law enforcement agents and inspectors spend most of their time in the field – be it in a stakeout, an explosives bunker, an inspection site, their car, or other location. Prior to the mobility program, agents needed to go in to the office in order to fill out paperwork and collect and analyze electronic intelligence. Now, they are able to accomplish these tasks while in the field or at home.

Technology plays a significant role in the success of ATF's mobility program. Agents need high-performing yet lightweight laptops, data storage, and other support services. Security is particularly important to ATF, and ATF's success shows that it is possible to maintain a highly secure exchange of information while mobile. Although this technology and support is costly, mobility has also led to cost reductions: ATF is shifting to small, wireless offices. It has reduced costs associated with traveling back and forth to the office. The bureau has established "equipment pools" for less frequent mobile workers, such as those traveling or working from home. Agents have been able to increase their time spent in the field, which allows law enforcement to be more effective and inspectors to complete more tasks. Mobility has also improved morale and ATF's response capabilities.

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TAXATION

The Virginia Department of Taxation (VA TAX) has a highly successful telework program with about 60 percent of all employees participating. Out of the participating employees, 28 percent telework 1 day per week, and 32 percent are remote workers who telework every day. Remote staff, including employees such as auditors and customer service representatives, are not assigned workstations. The agency estimates that it saves about 14,000 square feet and about $20,000 per month through its high utilization of real estate. The agency has been able to reduce real estate for 9 district offices while decreasing turnover. It has also been able to hire employees from across the state, which has bolstered job creation in economically depressed areas.

To be eligible to telework at VA TAX, employees must be able to perform their job tasks at home, maintain at least an average performance review rating, and have an internet connection and home computer that comply with the agency's security standards. The agency uses surveys of employees and managers to qualitatively assess performance. When appropriate, they also use quantitative measures to determine eligibility. These changes have yielded significant results; the agency found that the remote staff were twice as productive as non-remote staff, addressing more customer service requests than their colleagues. This increase in productivity has enabled the agency to maintain a smaller workforce while accomplishing the same objectives.

The success of VA TAX's telework program is due in part to well established communication tools. The agency intranet, TAXi, keeps all employees updated on technical issues, agency and individual office announcements, and retirement parties and birthdays. In addition, Quarterly Telework Meetings provide remote employees opportunities to come into the office and meet with their colleagues and leadership and to receive instruction on new ways to communicate and collaborate with coworkers.

U.S. PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

The U.S. Patent and trademark office (USPTO) has had a telework program in place for more than 12 years. The program is one of the most successful examples of telework in the Federal Government. It is voluntary and has very high participation. USPTO telework provides for space and related cost savings, and it has enabled the Agency to avoid securing $11 million in additional office space. Telework at USPTO incorporates comprehensive training programs, provides for COOP planning, offers hoteling programs for Trademarks and Patents, is not a "one-size-fits-all" initiative, and positions the USPTO as an employer of choice.

In 1997, USPTO piloted the Trademark Work @ Home Program with 18 examining attorneys who worked at home part-time. Today, of USPTO's 9,643 employees, 6,311 are eligible to telework and about 82 percent of eligibles participate. The Agency is considered a model for telework in the Federal Government and has secured numerous awards for its exemplary telework programs. The USPTO's telework programs are carefully designed to include IT and non-IT training, pre- and post-pilot surveys, focus groups, and final reports. Managers also receive training and are included in the survey process. Because of this strategic design, the USPTO has become the "go-to" agency for other federal agencies interested in starting or expanding their telework initiatives.

Approximately 2,200 employees have relinquished office space and work from home 4 days per week. When these employees—hoteling employees—come into the office, they use an electronic concierge to reserve workspace in the hoteling suites. The agency has 177 hoteling suites, which have a total of 341 total workstations. By utilizing hoteling stations instead of assigned workstations for hoteling employees, the agency has been able to grow in headcount without incurring the cost of additional real estate.

USPTO has found that while newer Patent examiners and Trademark examining attorneys are especially interested in teleworking, they need about three years in the office environment to learn their job before it is possible for them to work from home. The USPTO believes that their telework program has been a powerful marketing tool from the beginning, and USPTO continues to use it to attract new talent.

HEWLETT-PACKARD COMPANY

Hewlett-Packard (HP) has embraced mobility as a fundamental approach to work. Of their 320,000 employees, more than 70 percent exhibit mobility in their work. By leveraging this mobility in its workplace strategy, HP has been able to significantly reduce real estate, which has led to a corresponding reduction in energy consumption and carbon footprint. Over the last 5 years, HP has been able to eliminate millions of square feet of underutilized real estate and the carbon footprint associated with that space.

As an example, an HP site in Melbourne, Australia reduced the office footprint from 286, 000 square feet to 105,000 square feet, reduced occupancy cost per person by 55 percent, energy reduction by 70 percent and carbon emission by a similar amount.

Both technology and space design have been critical components in HP's successful shift to mobility. The company's approach to technology was to utilize simple tools and robust technology platforms. Mobile employees use cell phones, laptops, instant messaging, virtual collaboration rooms, and halo rooms. HP was able to maintain secure access to information and networks by using company-wide encryption technology.

The company's approach to space allows employees to consider the whole floor as their workplace. This means making a whole range of different work settings available to all. Such work settings include smaller, more open, and specifically collaborative workstations; increased attention on the number, size, and design of conference rooms, small focus rooms, quiet areas and open team spaces. HP has also enabled teams to have more effective interaction with customers and external team members by improving the technology and services in its public-facing conferencing areas.